

REMARKS

Claims 1-32, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Claims 1-32 have been amended in order to more clearly define the invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 11, 12, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by De Simone et al (6,212,548). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that the subject matter of the rejected independent claims 11, 23, 27 and 31 concern a communication system, server device, communication method and computer readable recording medium that concerns the communication among a plurality of client devices that are connected to a server device through a network. The key features of the invention include storage of a profile for each user. The profile comprises:

first identification information related to the network,
second identification related to the communication system, and
permit information relating to approval or disapproval of use of a specific service by the user.

The claim also requires validation processing which extracts the permit information corresponding to the first identification information from the user's profile when (1) the first identification information and second identification information are presented from the client device along with (2) the request for use of the specific service. A judgment is made as to whether the specific service should be provided on the basis of the permit information.

A similar grouping of claims 12, 24, 28 and 32 concern a communication system comprising a server device and a plurality of client devices connected to a network where a profile storage of (1) identification information for a user and (2) an arbitrary handle name is provided. In addition, an ID conversion based on extraction of the handle name corresponding to the identification information from the profile is provided when the identification information is presented from a client device and use of a specific service relating to another client device is

requested. The identification information is converted depending on the handle name, which provides desired anonymity and secrecy in chatroom participation.

DeSimone et al

The patent to DeSimone et al teaches a client-server message processing environment that supports communication among a plurality of users in real-time chat sessions. The client-server architecture is illustrated in Fig. 2A and is specifically described at col. 4, lines 39-56. The server 210 effects control and distribution of messages in a conversation among clients 230, 250, etc and may process and forward messages to other clients as desired. As a result, a plurality of simultaneous plural-participant conversations may be maintained by a single client. Each conversation is maintained at client terminals in an individual window presented on a display, as illustrated in Fig. 7.

As explained at col. 5, lines 40-54, any message from a message-originating user includes message elements identifying (i) the originating user, (ii) all recipients of the message and (iii) a conversation index. Each user in a conversation may have a unique identifier (ID) that is assigned specifically for a session or is permanently assigned. Such identifier may be an email address, an internet protocol (IT) address or a nickname (comparable to a arbitrary “handle name” of the user). All conversations initiated by a user will have a unique conversation index. The combination of sender’s ID and conversation index are used by recipients of a message to determine the conversation with which a message is associated. As explained at col. 15, lines 20-27, when a message is launched in an existing or initiated chat conversation, a conversation ID, a message originator’s ID and the identification of intended recipients is provided so that network routers, including respective servers, may route messages to the terminals of the indicated addressees.

DeSimone also teaches at col. 15, lines 28-53 that, with respect to a peer-to-peer system (see Fig. 2B), a conversation ID and originator ID may be used to identify a conversation and direct message content and control information to a local client. There is a brief mention that a new message window would be established on the basis of the new conversation ID and originator ID, provided that “any pre-agreed security or interest criteria are satisfied to the satisfaction of the receiving client.” However, there is no mention of the type of security or

interest criteria that may be applied. DeSimone also discusses the use of additional conditions for adding new participants, based on authorized augments or other admission policies at col. 14, line 41.

Thus, turning to the subject matter of the first group of independent claims (11, 23, 27 and 31), it is clear that the combination of three recited identification information units, related to (1) a user in the network, (2) a user in the communication system, and (3) permit information relating to approval or disapproval, is not found in DeSimone. Even if the “interest criteria” or “authorized augments” are viewed as corresponding to permit information, there is no use of both network and system ID information. Such information is a basis for permitting communication to a passive user, as stated to be a goal of the invention.

Moreover, there is no teaching or suggestion that the permit information is stored corresponding to the first identification information (network information). The brief mention of some pre-agreed security or interest criteria would not satisfy this specific claim requirement.

Finally, Applicants note that there is no specific teaching of a process for extracting permit information that corresponds to the first identification information (network ID) when the first and second identification information are presented from the client device. There is no teaching of an extraction step and there is no use of both system and network ID information to access any information in the system of DeSimone. Finally, there is no relationship between such extraction and a specific service as specified in the claims.

On the basis of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that these limitations in the claims are not met and that the claims cannot be anticipated or rendered obvious.

With regard to the second group of independent claims (12, 24, 28 and 32), Applicants note that the teachings at col. 5, lines 40-54 of DeSimone mention the use of nicknames in the chat context as an alternative to an email address or IT address. There is no teaching or suggestion of a communication system identification information that is combined with an arbitrary handle name. The portion of the text cited by the Examiner simply mentions a combination of senders ID and conversation index. It also mentions unique names for each conversation and unique names for each participant. However, there is no teaching or suggestion that there is a storage of information identifying the user in the communication system and an

arbitrary handle name of the user. Similarly, there is no teaching of a structure that converts one to the other.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 6-9, 13-16, 18-21, 25, 26, 29 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DeSimone in view of Grimm et al (5,828,843). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner notes that DeSimone discloses a client-server message processing environment (Fig. 2B) where a plurality of users communicate in a plurality of real-time text conversations. We also note that DeSimone describes a chat system in which a set of participants is maintained (col. 5, lines 22-34) and that a user is able to authorize another user to join in a conversation at any time, as mentioned at col. 5, lines 55-66 and col. 13, line 50-col. 15, line. 12. The Examiner admits that DeSimone does not explicitly state that the system can automatically match users based on “client attributes.”

The Examiner further notes that Grimm discloses a network of matching system for matching users of a multi-user network application, with particular reference to an online chat environment at col. 1, lines 17-20. Thus, the Examiner asserts that Grimm's system is operative in DeSimone system. The Examiner asserts that Grimm, in teaching a network matchmaking system, can accomplish this result. Thus, the Examiner considers it to be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system provided by DeSimone by adding the matching making capabilities provided by Grimm.

As explained at page 2-3 of the present application, in the conventional chat environment, a dialogue does not start unless the user opens a chat page and enters a dialogue statement. This creates a problem of sending information to a **passive user**. Similarly, when a user desires to talk individually to one of plural users participating in the same chat, an electronic mail must be sent by separately starting electronic mail system. This requires a user to download mail data, thereby precluding real time operation.

The invention solves these problems, such as matching a hobby or interest, so that a user can be selected on the basis of an attribute reflecting such hobby or occupation and a predetermined listing of acceptable designated users. A matching unit can be utilized, including

a friend list and rejection list as “specified information” for determining whether a user should be selected.

The specification at page 30-32 defines the use of a profile database 28 which may be accessed by unit 29 and support use of user information including a user ID, password, communication ID and nickname of each user in the system, profile of each user, friend information, rejection information and banned user list. The user ID is defined as the “first identification information” that is given to the user from the internet service provider. The communication ID is the identification information (second identification) for identifying the user in the system and is given to the user by the server device when each user is enrolled. Finally, the profile of each user includes an arbitrary handle name which is a nickname in the system that is registered in combination with the communication ID information provided by the server. The friend information, rejection information and banned user list also may be provided on the basis of the user ID.

These features of the invention are reflected in two claim groupings including a first group comprising independent claims 1, 13, 25 and 29, where the server includes a matching unit that selects a candidate user for participation in a chat and transmits the information about the candidate user to a client device. The sever also includes a check processing function for transmitting specified information for starting a chat when requested upon receipt of (1) user identification information from another client. This participation is based upon a “**specified standard**” on the basis of which a selection is made.

A second group of independent claims (6, 18, 26 and 30) similarly concern a matching unit which selects a candidate according to a **specified standard**. Message processing is also conducted by transmitting the message content to a client device of the specified user when the request for the message transmission is generated by another client device on the basis of the content of the specified message.

The Examiner admits that DeSimone does not teach such **specified criteria**. The Examiner looks to Grimm for such teaching, on the basis of a generic disclosure of a match making system.

As described in Grimm, a matchmaker receives from a first client a first request to be joined into a set of computer objects where the first request has first client attributes associated with the first client instance. The matchmaker selects a first server subset of a set of server instances in response to the first request based on the first client attributes. Then, a set of computer objects consisting of a first client instance is generated. A matchmaker augments the second set of computer objects with the second client instance based on the second request to be joined into the set of computer objects. The second request has second client attributes associated with the second client instance. The matchmaker removes a second server offset from the first server subset in response to the second request based on the second client attributes and adds the second client instance to the set of computer objects. A member of the second server subset is added to the set of computer objects based on attributes associated with each member of the set of computer objects.

Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing complex relationship in Grimm et al does not meet the limitations of the claimed invention in either of the two groups. The claims in the first group simply call for a server to implement a matching function by selecting a user for participation in the chat according to a specified standard. Applicants submit that nothing in DeSimone teaches such selection by a server and nothing in Grimm suggests a modification of DeSimone to implement such feature. The statement in DeSimone that clients are selected based on attributes of their users, the clients, servers and/or communication links is a broad statement that does not disclose the specific claimed features of the invention. Finally, Applicants submit that there is no teaching in the two references that the sequence set forth in the claims, namely, (1) the transmission from the server device to a designated recipient client of specified information for starting the chat on the basis of (2) an input of specified users by a client device, could be applied in the DeSimone system.

With regard to the second group of claims, Applicants submit that a matching unit and a message processing unit for transmitting a message content to a client device of a specified user on the basis of a request for message transmission generated by another client device, is not seen in either reference.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
09/777,680

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner is using hindsight, based upon the Applicants' own teachings, to attempt to combine the features of the two references. Even though Grimm does mention application to a chat environment, the manner in which such application would be undertaken, particularly for the DeSimone system, is not taught in either reference. Accordingly, the claims should be considered patentable.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

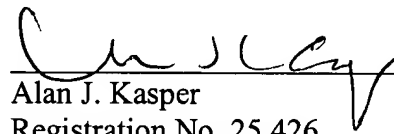
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